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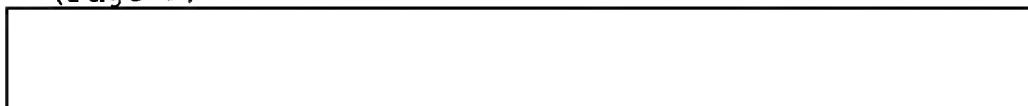
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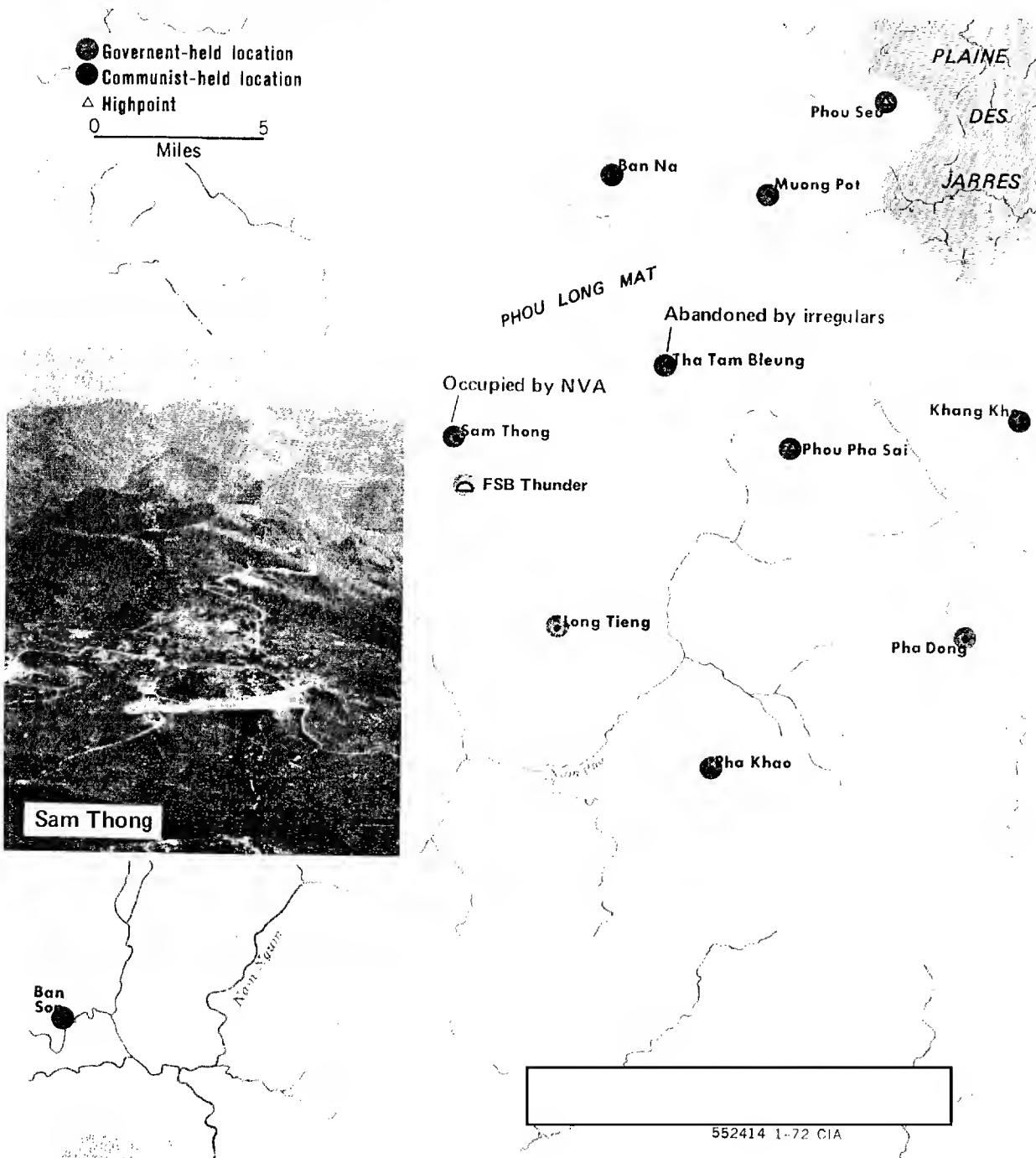
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LONG TIENG AREA



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C LAOS: The North Vietnamese continue to breach the government's defenses in the Long Tieng area.

On 10 January irregular units abandoned Tha Tam Bleung and some nearby positions and withdrew to the south. At last report these units were being shelled by the North Vietnamese 130-mm. field guns. The fluid situation now prevailing in the area will probably make it difficult for other irregular units nearby to attempt to regain the position. In addition, the North Vietnamese have now occupied Sam Thong and the Sam Thong Valley. US pilots report numerous enemy troops are active throughout the area, reducing the likelihood that the valley can be quickly retaken.

Many of the units in outlying positions are isolated and their aerial resupply and medical evacuation are increasingly vulnerable to North Vietnamese firepower. With the Pha Dong - Ban Na defensive line completely shattered, Sàm Thong lost, and Communist units now in strength in the valleys close to Long Tieng, the government's strategy appears to be boiling down basically to tenaciously defending what it now holds in the hope that the combination of US airpower and Communist logistic problems will keep the enemy at bay.

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VIETNAM: Serious personnel problems continued to plague South Vietnam's armed forces last year despite an over-all improvement in fighting performance.

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[redacted]
there was a substantial increase over 1970 in the number of South Vietnamese (ARVN) regular battalions assigned to daily operations against the enemy, and [redacted] the personnel difficulties stemmed in part from this increased fighting load.

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[redacted] The actual strength of the armed forces during the period was about 70 percent of that authorized, while the average ARVN infantry battalion operated at only about two thirds of its authorized strength. The monthly average of "troop replacements" for the military forces as a whole decreased over 38 percent from 1970. [redacted]

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[redacted] it is apparent that growing war weariness has undercut both government and enemy recruitment in South Vietnam in the past year.

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ARVN casualties rose by over 11 percent during the 1971 period, reflecting the increased fighting load. Partly as a result of the increased combat, the monthly desertion rate increased by ten percent in 1971 for a total of nearly 70,000 men during the eight-month period. Desertions have consistently hampered the development of the South Vietnamese armed forces over the years despite major efforts to stop them. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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Although ARVN operations against the enemy improved over-all both in quantity and quality, performance deteriorated in certain key indices. The number of weapons lost by the ARVN during combat rose by 123 percent over 1970, and the number of enemy weapons captured fell by 22 percent. The latter statistic could, however, reflect an increased reliance on air and artillery in some areas, in lieu of ground combat.

Manpower shortages also plagued the air force during 1971, but it managed a very creditable over-all increase in performance and activity. Air force sorties rose by over 50 percent during the period, with gains reflected in all types of fixed-wing and helicopter operations.

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WARSAW PACT: A Pact summit meeting is to be held in Prague later this month.

Although the announcement of the meeting Monday gave no particulars, it is likely that issues related to European security will dominate the agenda. The Soviets have convened such Pact meetings at key points in their push toward detente and are likely to take this opportunity to convey their views on ratification of the Polish and Soviet treaties with West Germany and signature of the final quadripartite protocol of the Berlin agreement.

To placate the East Germans and to keep them in step during ratification, Moscow may place new emphasis on East German recognition and admission to the UN. Pankow's uneasiness with Soviet moves in Europe is being reflected in press attacks on the Brandt government which mirror concern over the destabilizing impact of the current detente atmosphere on the East German internal situation.

The Soviets are likely to use the summit to reiterate the Pact foreign ministers' call in early December for initiation of multilateral preparatory talks for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Moscow continues to propose convocation of such a conference in 1972, but probably is willing to settle for preparatory steps this year.

Another important agenda item is likely to be the implications for bloc solidarity of China's entry into the UN and of President Nixon's forthcoming trip to Peking. Moscow has lobbied vigorously for opposition to alleged US-Chinese collusion. In the face of continued Romanian opposition to polemics with Peking, however, the Kremlin probably will have to be satisfied with a boilerplate call for continued unity against imperialist intrigues.

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KOREA: North Korea has issued a far-reaching proposal for direct talks with South Korean leaders.

In an effort to gain the propaganda advantage by a show of flexibility, Premier Kim Il-song has told Japanese newsmen in Pyongyang that he will propose a "peace pact" between North and South and a move to expand the current Red Cross talks to include political matters. Much of the exclusive interview on 10 January was a mere synthesis and elaboration of earlier Pyongyang proposals but, according to the Japanese press account, the premier for the first time used language suggesting that the actual withdrawal of US troops from the South would not be a pre-condition for an accord.

This and Kim's generally restrained tone indicate that the interview is but the latest step in the North Korean campaign to project an image of reasonableness and accommodation. While accusing the South of foot-dragging in the preparatory Red Cross talks, the North in recent months has muted its invective against the South Korean Government and has maintained a relatively harmonious atmosphere at Panmunjom.

Although for the past several months the Red Cross talks have bogged down in wrangling over the agenda and procedural matters, it now appears that this deadlock may soon be resolved. The South Korean ambassador who is to lead Seoul's delegation recently told US officials that the formal negotiating sessions are expected to begin about 1 April.

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ZAIRE-ANGOLA: Kinshasa has tightened its control of the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE) because of continuing dissension within the Zairian-based Angolan insurgent group.

President Mobutu, GRAE's major benefactor, recently decided that GRAE military operations would be financed and controlled directly through the Zairian Ministry of Defense [redacted]

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[redacted] Mobutu also told GRAE leader Holden Roberto that henceforth he could perform only non-military functions. Although he presumably retains a political role, Roberto has, at least temporarily, been reduced to a figurehead.

Roberto and his rebellious military staff have been at odds for several months over the movement's long-standing shortage of materiel and financial resources. This continuing dissension apparently prompted Mobutu to intervene, probably to prevent conflict within the group from causing civil disturbances inside Zaire, especially among the large Angolan refugee population that lives along the Zaire-Angola border. Mobutu has continued to support GRAE, despite its dim prospects, as an alternative to the other two Angolan insurgent groups.

GRAE has long been plagued by leadership conflicts, largely because of Roberto's unwillingness to compromise or to delegate authority. Roberto may eventually reclaim control of GRAE, however, because his most competent and likely successors quit the movement long ago. In any event, the present turmoil within GRAE can only further handicap its limited insurgency effort in Angola. [redacted]
[redacted]

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NORTH AFRICA - SPAIN: The western Maghreb countries are showing renewed interest in the Spanish Sahara.

The foreign ministers of Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania agreed at a recent meeting in Algiers to reinforce their governments' coordinated efforts to hasten "liberation" of the territory. Nonetheless, the final communiqué was moderate in tone, calling on Spain to adopt a policy that "puts it in step with history." The attention given the Spanish Sahara problem in the communiqué and Algerian press increases the likelihood that it will be prominent among the issues to be discussed at a meeting of the three chiefs of state scheduled for Rabat in late March.

The three countries had agreed in late 1970 to intensify their efforts to decolonize Spanish Sahara, although their conflicting claims to the area remain. Since that time, they have attempted to reach a mutually acceptable solution with Spain. However, the potential remains for a renewal of inter-Maghrebian disputes if Spain ever decides to withdraw. The discovery of large deposits of high-grade phosphate ore several years ago reinforced the importance of the area to all the countries concerned. Spain and the Maghreb countries supported the 1965 UN resolution calling for the decolonization of the Spanish Sahara but Madrid has dragged its feet over holding the plebiscite suggested by the UN. The UN General Assembly decided last month to defer further consideration of the territory's status until 1973.

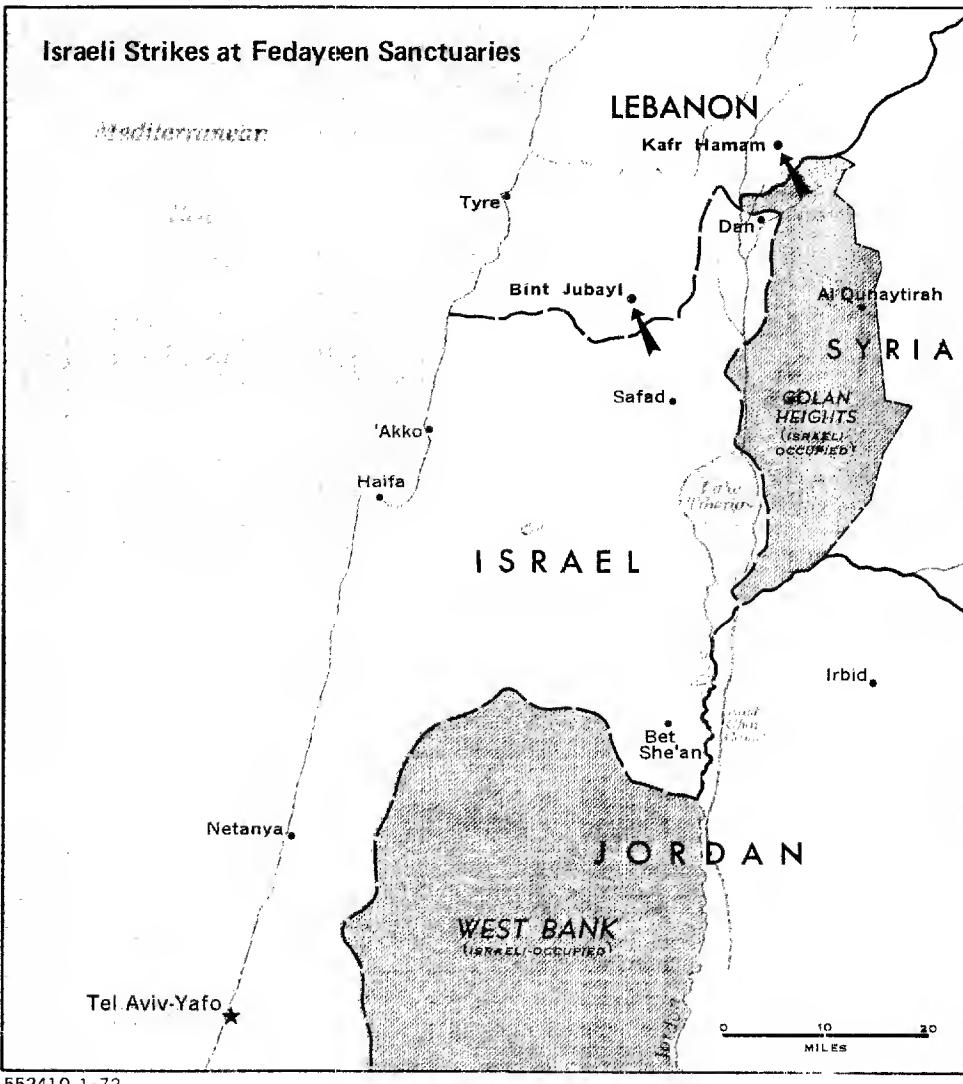
Internal Moroccan politics might undermine the current unity of the three states. King Hassan has been moving toward the formation of a government which might include a nationalist opposition party that considers Spanish Sahara an internal Moroccan issue. Hassan's freedom of action to act in concert with other states may therefore be seriously reduced before the group has a chance to resolve the Spanish Sahara issue.

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ISRAEL-LEBANON: The Israeli strikes at fedayeen sanctuaries in Lebanon on 10 January followed several weeks of increased terrorist operations along the border. Late last week, the commanding officer of the Israeli Northern Command passed a warning to the Lebanese through the UN-sponsored Israel-Lebanon Mixed Armistice Commission that failure to restrain the fedayeen would result in "corrective action" by the Israelis. Several terrorist incidents occurred subsequently, the most serious of which was the Katyusha rocket attack on 9 January on Safad--an Israeli town some seven miles below the border that had been untouched by terrorism since 1948. In the retaliatory operations, the Israelis reported killing an undetermined number of fedayeen and admitted to the loss of two Israeli soldiers. Israeli retaliation against the fedayeen in Syria for the murder and mutilation of an Israeli engineer in the Golan Heights on 6 January is still possible, but Israel may want to gauge the effects of its strikes into Lebanon before taking further reprisals.

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PARAGUAY: The government has set an unusually high bail for accused narcotics smuggler Auguste Ricord while the appellate court considers the lower court's ruling against extraditing him to the US. Despite fears that Ricord's colleagues would raise almost any amount to give him a chance to flee the country, Ricord reportedly found the \$317,000 bail "exorbitant" and indicated he would remain in jail. The appellate finding will probably be announced next month, and it will perhaps hinge less on the legal merits of the case than on whether President Stroessner has decided that warm relations with the US outweigh the risk of exposing official Paraguayan involvement in the narcotics trade.

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